COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Colchester, CT

BUDGET COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, March 3, 2022
BOE Budget Committee Meeting 9:00 AM
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

MINUTES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Jessica Morozowich, Donna Antonacci, Christopher Rivers

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Jeffrey Burt, CFO Maggie Cosgrove, Director of Educational Operations Mario Hurtado, Assistant Director of Pupil Services and Special Education Elisa Fabiszak

OTHERS PRESENT: Executive Assistant to the Superintendent Heather Petit

1. CALL TO ORDER

1.1 Call to Order

Chair Morozowich called the meeting to order at 9:01AM

2. ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

None.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

3.1 Public Comment

None.

4. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES

4.1 Approval of February 3, 2022 Minutes

Motion by: D.Antonacci
To approve the minutes of the February 3, 2022 Budget Committee Meeting
Second by: Christopher Rivers
Vote: Unanimous
Roll call: Jessica Morozowich, Christopher Rivers, Donna Antonacci

5. *PRIORITY DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Update on 2022-2023 Budget

Superintendent Burt stated that he will present the budget to the full board on March 8, 2022. Superintendent Burt was able to put the entire capital improvement plan in the budget as well as IT. There is an increase at CES due to increased enrollment and movement of staff. Jack Jackter Intermediate School (JJIS) will see a reduction due to staff movement to William J. Johnston Middle School (WJ). WJ will see an increase due

to staff from JJIS coming in at higher steps. Bacon Academy will see a decrease due to decreased enrollment and staff reallocations, attrition, and potential reductions.

Superintendent Burt said the reorganization of the finance department will include a business manager and accountant for the school district and shared accounts payable and payroll positions with the town.

The Superintendent stated the board will see a decrease in the Central Office budget due to the creation of a Human Resources Department so they will have their own budget for professional development and other items.

Superintendent Burt stated the capital improvement plan will be budgeted for entirely in his proposed budget. The Superintendent said there were significant savings at the end of the 2020 school year from being closed for four months due to COVID so the district was able to shift capital improvement funds into reserve. There are significant items at schools that need to be attended to. Mr. Rivers said he wanted to make sure we are checking costs and doing due diligence to ensure we are getting the best prices and rates.

Chair Morozwich asked about heating oil and whether or not it was decided to lock in the rate. CFO Cosgrove stated that if they were to lock in right now the oil prices are significantly higher than last month. At this time, the budget does not reflect a lock-in rate. CFO Cosgrove said the budget would increase if locked in based on current price. Chair Morozowich asked if the budget would have to be frozen if rates continue to increase. CFO Cosgrove said they had not had to freeze the budget in quite some time and did not foresee that having to occur.

Chair Morozowich asked how many positions from the American Rescue Plan Act grant (ARPA) were moved back into the budget. Superintendent Burt said a kindergarten teacher, preschool teacher and a paraprofessional were moved back to the budget. Next year, Superintendent Burt said they will be moving a special education teacher and paraprofessional back into the budget. He stated he worked with the Director Teaching and Learning Dr. Charles Hewes, on a feasible budgetary plan to move the positions back into the general budget from the grants.

5.2 Day Tank Replacement
Superintendent Burt stated that an extension of the underground tank work and timeline will be approved by the state. The Superintendent said in regard to the oil spill they have instituted carbon filters and the area has been sealed off, and students have been back in school. He stated they put in an insurance claim to Travelers but it does not look like this will be covered. Some of the oil went underneath the concrete slab so it will need to be removed. Director of Educational Operations Mario Hurtado said the entire remediation could cost up to $500,000.

Donna Antonacci asked about nearby residents and if they are in jeopardy of oil in their well water. The State Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) offered testing to the 5 residents affected. To date 3 have taken advantage of this offer and no oil was found. In regard to the oil that remains under the concrete, DEEP found

minimal chance that surrounding areas would be affected. Superintendent Burt said they will need to do further exploration under the concrete slab while remediation occurs.

Superintendent Burt said there was a failure in the day tank and that it will need to be replaced. This is where the oil spill came from and it is non-functional. The proposal for the new tank was shared. Director of Education Operations Mario Hurtado said the company is very professional and has done work for the district in the past.

Motion by: C.Rivers
To approve the proposal to replace the day tank for Bacon Academy
Second by: D.Antonacci
Vote: Unanimous
Roll call: Donna Antonacci, Christopher Rivers, Jessica Morozowich

5.3 Special Education and 504 Evaluation Rates

Elisa Fabiszak reported that the district has not been billing Norwich for evaluation costs. Ms. Fabiszak stated it is typical for districts to bill for this piece. Districts may utilize their own staff to perform these evaluations and save money. Ms. Fabiszak researched surrounding district rates and came up with the proposal. Superintendent Burt said this would not occur this year as they would want to give districts time to plan for costs. Superintendent Burt thanked Ms. Fabiszak for discovering, researching and moving this forward.

Motion by: C.Rivers
To approve movement of the proposed evaluation rates to the full board for approval.
Second by: D.Antonacci
Vote: Unanimous
Roll call: Donna Antonacci, Christopher Rivers, Jessica Morozowich

5.4 Underground Storage Tank at BA - Update

Discussed under 5.2

6. BUDGET REPORTS

6.1 Monthly Budget Reports

CFO Cosgrove presented the February budget report. CFO Cosgrove stated there were no significant changes. CFO Cosgrove said she will be reaching out to new board members to meet with them as soon as she is able. Mr. Rivers said he would appreciate a time to meet.

6.2 Cafeteria Fund

Chair Morozwich asked about the $0 in cafeteria equipment. CFO Cosgrove said they were not budgeted which is why they are $0; however, some equipment is in the capital outlay line. CFO Cosgrove said other items do not meet the threshold.

CFO Cosgrove spoke to the revenue line being $0 in this month's report. CFO Cosgrove stated she worked with auditors in regard to balance of accounts. In regard to food monies, the district technically received it but it isn't a sale but rather dollars sitting in student accounts until they use it for lunch, et al. CFO Cosgrove stated they took that

out of revenue which is why it now shows a deficit balance. CFO Cosgrove said that money put on student accounts should go through My Payments Plus. Finance is working on other individuals trained on the My Payments Plus software.

Ms. Antonacci inquired as to how probable it is to find someone to fill CFO Cosgrove's position. Superintendent Burt said once the board approves the budget he is planning to post the position.

6.3 Health Insurance Reserve
CFO Cosgrove said this month there was a slight dip due to five weeks' worth of claims due to the number of weeks in January. February will bring that into more alignment with a shortened number of weeks. CFO Cosgrove said more claims have been filed than previous months. CFO Cosgrove said the balance at the end of November was used for budget calculations. The district still has a balance of approximately $4M.

6.4 Special Education Excess Cost Report
Superintendent Burt said that most of the deficits shown will be offset by state funds and reconciled at the end of the fiscal year.

6.5 Use of Schools
None.

6.6 Capital Reserve
None.

6.7 Budget Transfers Under $5,000
JJIS budget transfer for school nurse supplies.

7. OLD BUSINESS
None.

8. *NEW BUSINESS
None.

9. PUBLIC COMMENT ON NEW ISSUES RAISED OR SUBJECTS DEVELOPED
9.1 Public Comment - Chair Morozowich would like to see a push for residents to join the budget workshops as the process moves forward over the next several weeks.

10. ADJOURN
The meeting adjourned at 10:13AM.